

NOV 3 1968

HUMAN EVENTS

Approved For Release 1999/09/07 : CIA-RDP75-000

## Madame Nhu and the State Dept.

In many intangible ways, Madame Nhu's trip to America has bolstered her country's position vis-a-vis the Kennedy Administration. The Vietnamese lady won over some skeptical newsmen in the "lion's mouth," as she chose to call the Nation's Capital. But she has also made a deep and favorable impression with the American public, which counts heavily in this politically attuned Administration.



Zealous official attempts to discredit her have not all paid off. The Viet Nam Embassy reports letters were running 3 to 2 against her before her arrival. Since her coming, Madame Nhu has received over 5,000 letters, 95 per cent favorable.

Her obviously cordial reception at Fordham and Georgetown universities, both Catholic institutions of learning, also did not go unnoticed by the Administration's astute political advisers. (Cardinals Cushing and Spellman were reportedly instrumental in persuading the President two years ago to take his initial firm stand against the Communists in Viet Nam.)

The controversial beauty, furthermore, brought some cheering news, which *Human Events* has since confirmed through both military sources and the State Department.

Within the past six months, some 10,000 Viet Cong Reds—over half, hard-core guerrillas—have defected to South Viet Nam. This report clashes sharply with liberal news sources, which have created the impression the military situation for the free Vietnamese had badly deteriorated since the "Buddhist affair."

Despite these outwardly optimistic signs, the State Department has set in motion a series of policies which could paralyze the entire war effort. Roger Hilsman, a top department official; Paul Kattenburg, head of the Vietnamese desk in Washington and once close to the Institute of Pacific Relations crowd; and William Trueheart, No. 2 man in Saigon, are reliably reported to be pushing such policies.

Allegedly, the "squeeze" is designed to force Diem to reform his regime. In truth, it has hampered the war effort and poisoned the working relationship between Diem and the U.S. government—a tandem now winning the war against the Reds.

Economic cuts, resulting in serious fuel and food shortages; a verbal assault against the Diem regime by the United States Information Service; withdrawal of funds for the internal security forces—all are part of the department's pressuring tactics.

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The recall of John Richardson, the CIA chief in Saigon friendly to Diem, and the Administration's recent sidelining of Brig. Gen. Edward V. Lansdale, are also considered damaging to Viet Nam's morale. Lansdale, now a chief target of liberal newsmen, was one of the influential Pentagon policy makers who swung Ike behind Diem back in 1954.

What particularly alarms Asian observers here is that Vietnamese policies smack of the same old State Department pattern. The American government lays down a clear-cut anti-Communist policy, implements it, then the State Department gets into the act. Thus fell the anti-Communist governments of Chiang Kai-shek in China and Phoumi Nosavan in Laos.